United Nations

Daily Highlights

Department of Public Information • Central News Section • New York

Prepared by Central News

DH/1529
26 November 1993

FRIDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Jan Eliasson, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, will be leaving United Nations in January 1994; will remain available after that to undertake special missions on behalf of Secretary-General.

+ Secretary-General recommends to Security Council that mandate of United Nations Disengagement Observer Force be extended for further six months; says that despite present calm, situation between Israel and Syria remains dangerous.

+ Difficulties between parties in Western Sahara made it impossible to hold free and fair referendum by end of 1993, Secretary-General reports to Security Council; says that if progress is made, referendum might be possible in mid-1994.

+ Secretary-General recommends that mandate of United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador be extended to end of May 1994; says recent developments were threaten peace process, and that ONUSAL's presence will be critically important in run-up to election next year.

+ Mandate of United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus should be extended till 15 June 1994, Secretary-General says in report to Security Council; says he will be resuming intensive contacts with both sides after elections in Turkish Cypriot community on 12 December.

+ World NGO Forum launching International Year of Family begins in Malta on Malta on Sunday; Nearly 1,000 representatives of non-governmental organizations from 100 countries will examine theme of families as basic unit of society.

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Jan Eliasson, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator, will be leaving his position at the end of January 1994 to take up a senior post with the Swedish Foreign Ministry. Announcing the resignation today, a United Nations spokesman said

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali had reluctantly agreed to release Mr. Eliasson from his present responsibilities, but had asked him to remain available thereafter to undertake special missions on his behalf. Mr. Eliasson had agreed to do so.

The Under-Secretary-General will be chairing the Fourth Coordination Meeting on Humanitarian Assistance for Somalia which begins in Addis Ababa on Monday. The spokesman said Mr. Boutros-Ghali had expressed his full backing and best wishes for success for Mr. Eliasson in that endeavour, and also in his forthcoming duties. He had paid tribute to the key role Mr. Eliasson had played in establishing the Department of Humanitarian Affairs and to his commitment to the work of the United Nations.

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Despite the present quiet in the Israel-Syria sector, the situation there remains potentially dangerous, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has said in a report to the Security Council, dated 22 November, on the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force (UNDOF). Unless and until a comprehensive settlement could be reached which covers all aspects of the Middle East problem, it was likely to remain so. Consequently, he recommended that the Council extend the mandate of the Force for a further period of six months, until 31 May 1994.

He wrote that he continued to hope that determined efforts would be made by all concerned to tackle the problem, with a view to arriving at a just and durable peace settlement. But under the prevailing conditions, he considered UNDOF's presence in the area to be essential. Both the Syrian Government and the Israeli Government, he said, had given their assent to the proposed extension of the Force's mandate.

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In view of remaining difficulties between the parties to the conflict in Western Sahara, it would not be possible to fulfil the goal of holding a free and fair referendum there by the end of this year, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has said. In a report to the Security Council on the matter, dated 24 November, he said, however, that on the assumption that those difficulties were settled and that progress was made in the intitial stages of the voter registration process, he hoped to be able to report to the Council early next year with a detailed timetable for holding the referendum in mid-1994. He also hoped to present at that time his recommendations for the necessary adjustments to the present strength of United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO).

He pointed out that any estimated date set at this stage still bore little meaning unless both parties, the Moroccan Government and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Saguia el-Hamra and Rio de Oro (POLISARIO), demonstrated a spirit of cooperation and forebearance. Without that, he

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stressed, it would remain impossible to implement the settlement plan. He said he proposed to maintain the existing military and civilian strength of MINURSO until his next report.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has recommended that the Security Council extend the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL) for a further six months, until the end of May 1994. In a report on ONUSAL dated 23 November, he said that while impressive progress had been made in implementing the Peace Accords in El Salvador, recent developments were threatening the previous achievements, especially as the electoral campaign got under way. Those developments had included a series of murders of political figures, suggesting a possible re-emergence of the "death squads" familiar during the country's civil war.

The Secretary-General said that the elections and the transition to the administration of the newly elected President, to be inaugurated next June, would be a critically important period. It was clearly necessary for ONUSAL to continue to carry out its verification and good offices functions throughout that time. He said he had just received a recommendation from his Special Representative for El Salvador for some additional police observers to be assigned to ONUSAL and for a modest increase in the Mission's economic and political staff, but that recommendation was still under consideration.

As regards the future on ONUSAL beyond 31 May 1994, at present he felt it would be desirable to keep the Mission in existence, at reduced strength, for a further period of a few months, to verify the full deployment of the National Civil Police and the implementation of other major p nts in the Peace Accords.

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While continuing consultations on the subject with the parties in Cyprus, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali has recommended to the Security Council that it extend the mandate of the United Nations Peace-keeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) for a further six months, until 15 June 1994. In a report dated 22 November, he said that he would be resuming intensive contacts with both sides and with Turkey after the elections in the Turkish Cypriot community on 12 December.

It was expected, he said, that the Turkish Government's declared support for the package of proposed confidence-building measures might bring about positive results. It was also essential, he said, that the Greek Cypriot side demonstrate its readiness to take the specific steps called for in the package. He said he would report further to the Council on the outcome of his efforts by the end of February 1994.

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He once again urged that as a first step towards the withdrawal of non-Cypriot forces envisaged in the set of ideas, the Turkish forces on the island by reduced to their 1982 level and that this be reciprocated be a suspension of weapons acquisition programmes on the Greek Cypriot side.

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A World NGO Forum launching the International Year of the Family will be held in Valletta, Malta, from Sunday, 28 November, to Thursday, 2 December 1993. Nearly 1,000 representatives of non-governmental organizations from 100 countries will be participating. "Promoting Families for the Well-being of Individuals and Societies" is the Forum's theme, reflecting the view that the International Year of the Family is an opportunity to promote social issues as part of sustainable development, and to integrate events regarding women, children, disabled persons, youth and the elderly.

The UN General Assembly proclaimed 1994 as the International Year of the Family to create greater awareness of the family as the fundamental unit of society and to promote activities supporting families among Governments, policy-makers and the public. The NGO Forum will provide a platform for exchanging and generating ideas and activities, thus serving as a catalyst for further action on behalf of families.

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